



PEDRO E. SEGARRA
MAYOR

CITY OF HARTFORD
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON THE
ENVIRONMENT
 WASTE & RECYCLING ACADEMY, 1ST FLOOR
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Commissioners

**Testimony of Mark Mitchell MD, MPH, Chair
and William Upholt, Co-Chair**

Acting Chair:

Advisory Commission on the Environment (ACOTE), City of Hartford

Commissioners

**in support of
Proposed Governor's Bill 27:**

Acting Chair:

An Act Concerning Connecticut's Recycling and Materials Management Strategy

Mark Mitchell, MD, MPH

Co-chair:

William Upholt

Secretary

June O'Neil

Members :

JoAnne Bauer

Abe Scarr

Russell Williams

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Tiana Glass

Chairperson Meyer, Chairperson Gentile and Members of the Committee: as Chair and Co-chair of the Advisory Commission on the Environment (ACOTE) for the City of Hartford, we thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today in support of proposed Governor's Bill No. 27: An Act Concerning Connecticut's Recycling and Materials Management Strategy

Hartford Community members work with ACOTE to promote a more inclusive economy that builds the cultural vitality of the city and preserves the natural environment.

For decades, Hartford has accepted the trash of over seventy towns going to the South Meadows incinerator and North Meadows landfill. Approximately one third of the state's trash is currently brought into and processed in our community. The trucks wear down our roads and release air and noise pollution. The incinerator releases toxic chemicals like mercury into the air we breathe. Not surprisingly, Hartford has one of the highest asthma rates in the state. In recent years, we have also borne an increased financial burden as the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) has reduced the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) it pays the city. City residents must pay higher taxes or face reduced services as a result.

We have been pleased by the attention Governor Malloy, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and members of this Committee have given to waste and recycling issues over the past several years through various task forces and working groups. While further study is certainly worthwhile, it is high time for action, and we are happy to support Proposed Governor's Bill 27 with its goal of transforming waste and recycling practices in Connecticut.

The two most critical components of this bill are doubling the reuse and recycling rate in the state and repurposing the Hartford incinerator. These two initiatives lay the groundwork to transform Connecticut from a state that



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manages waste to one that manages materials. Doing so will save cities and towns money, reduce the public health threats from waste disposal, reduce the waste of valuable resources, and stimulate the economy. Reuse and recycling not only create more jobs than landfilling or incineration, they also boost the economy and create jobs by creating new markets and industries using the reused or recycled material.

We support the changes to the name and responsibilities of CRRA necessary to carry out these changes. This transition will involve some challenges and will not happen overnight. But we must be resolute in pushing for change, and we support the aggressive timelines laid out in the bill.

We know that various stakeholders, including Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra, are offering recommendations for improvements to the bill, and we ask that the committee, Governor, and DEEP staff carefully consider these recommendations. Most important to us is ongoing and meaningful opportunities for public participation in planning the new Solid Waste Management Plan and in the selection of new technologies to replace the Hartford Incinerator.

The Environmental Protection Agency recently commemorated the twenty year anniversary of President Clinton's Environmental Justice Executive Order. The order calls on federal agencies to identify and address "disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."¹

As our community has borne the brunt of the problems with Connecticut's current waste management practices, it is critical that our perspective be taken into account as we craft solutions.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today in support of proposed Governor's Bill 27.

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¹ http://www.epa.gov/region2/ej/exec_order_12898.pdf